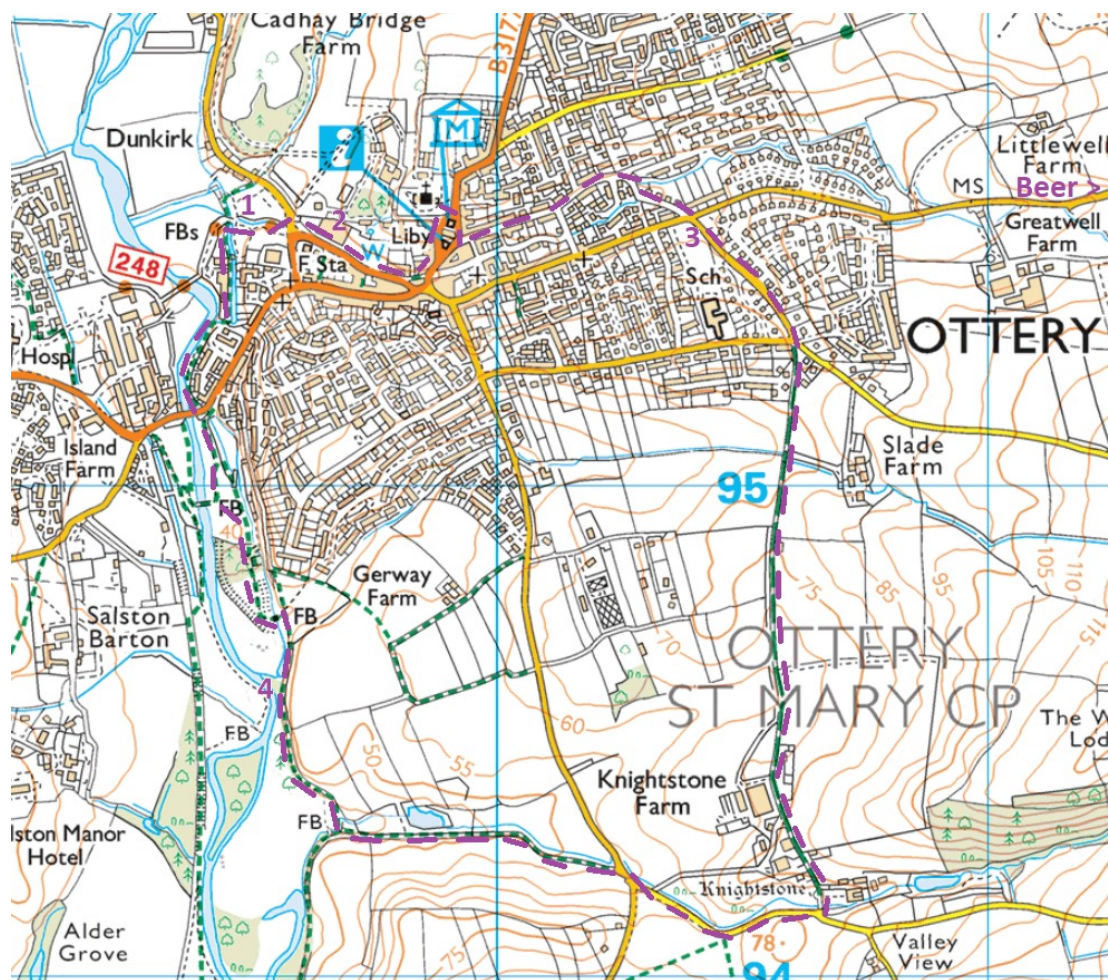


## Circular Walk round Ottery St Mary (3.5 miles)

*Ottery St Mary is around 10 miles from Beer. It is around 3 times the size of Beer and so has several pubs and cafes you could enjoy at the start or end of this walk. You can park at the Canaan Way pay and display car park (1) or alternative free for 2 hours at Sainsbury's (2) which is long enough to complete the walk (1½ hours) and then have a quick look round the town. Alternatively you could park on the roadside on the way into Ottery and avoid the town centre. After the Ottery St Mary town sign, look for the next crossroads which also warns of a school (3). Turn left here into Slade Road and park on the right. This is on the route of the walk, so you can just pick the route up from here.*



From Canaan Way Car park exit onto the main road and straight after the Ottery St Mary town sign, turn left into Hind Street. This will take you past an Esso garage on the right, and Sainsbury's on the left. If you parked in Sainsbury's exit the car park and turn left (the direction of the one way street). You could visit the town centre now, but for the walk, take the next left into the pedestrian Saddlers Lane. On the far side turn left along Silver Street. When you reach the top of Silver Street you will be at the Church of St Mary, known as a miniature Exeter Cathedral and was actually built in some way to imitate it. Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born in 1772 in Ottery St Mary: the churchyard and river area were his playground and the source and inspiration of much of his poetry.

After the church, curve around to the right towards 'The Normandy House' and head down Cornhill a short way before turning left in front of the Kings Arms into Sandhill Street. Continue along this road for 5 minutes or so before it curves right and heads down to pass a small stream before eventually reaching the main road at a crossroads. Go straight across into Slade Road.

Carry along Slade Road for 5 minutes before reaching a crossroads with housing estates either side. At this point take the bridleway straight ahead (to the left of the sign for Longdog's Lane). Carry straight along this path, first past houses then several farm entrances. You will pass through a few large farm gates before eventually heading down to pass between the garden and house of the impressive Knightstone Manor. Go over the stream via stone footbridge and through the main gates to reach a country lane. Turn right and walk along the road. Be wary of cars, though this is a quiet road. After 5 minutes do not be tempted by the double footpaths to the left, but instead stay on the lane till the T junction at the end. Turn right and walk a few yards on the nearside of the road until you can see round the bend ahead, making it safer to cross the road to the footpath opposite.

Continue along this track, eventually passing a small lake below on the right before descending to a choice of signposted tracks. Take the right path which goes through a farm gate and crosses a small stream before passing round the lower edge of the field to reach a metal gate and steps up into a wood. Along this track you will pass the Pixies Parlour caves. In 1793 Coleridge escorted a party of young ladies to Pixies' Parlour, a favourite spot for the young Sam who had carved his initials in the rock of the cave. Today it is celebrated on Pixie Day when the pixies are banished to the caves, which is re-enacted by local children. Just a little further on look for the short steep path down on the left (4). It is worth popping down here if you can manage to view the banks of the River Otter. Return, and then carry along the path to reach more steps up to a metal gate.

This leads to a path alongside of a field that leads you back towards the town. Follow this path along the hedge, then down to the left to reach a wooden bridge over a stream. Cross this and follow the path through more woods to reach another field. Turn left and head to the metal bridge where you can get a look up and down the river, but do not cross this bridge. Instead carry on towards the larger road bridge which you can duck left and pass under to reach a path on the other side in front of a high wall. Turn left to keep the river on the left until you cross an access road to the flats to reach the Tumbling Weir which was an overflow from the leat that provided power to the wool factory and corn mills. Carry along this path with the leat to the right to reach playing fields. Cross the wooden bridge and the rear of Canaan Way car park will be on your left. The playing field contains a few interesting information boards about Samuel Coleridge.